

## **UNISON**

### **Job Brief: Assistant Professional Services Unit Officer – Regions and Governance**

#### **Introduction**

1. UNISON is Britain's leading public services trade union, with over 1.3 million members working in the public services, private, voluntary and community sectors and in the energy services. We employ 1200 staff, approximately 370 at our national centre in Euston, central London and the remainder in our twelve regions across the UK, including Northern Ireland.

UNISON is the leading union in local government, the NHS, community and voluntary sector, education and children services and a range of private and public sector employers where we negotiate pay and terms and conditions of employment.

In addition, we provide specialist advice and representation to UNISON members who are subject to investigations by their professional regulators. We support members throughout the entirety of the fitness to practice proceedings with regulators across the UK and in the devolved nations. UNISON has a long and proud history of negotiating, bargaining and campaigning for our members on pay health and safety and equalities. The Assistant Professional Services Officers we are seeking to appoint will be key members of our team, they will have an important role to play in representing UNISON members

#### **The Role**

2. The Assistant Professional Services Officer (APSO) is a key part of our team in UNISON Centre. You will have excellent communication skills, have some experience of representing and advocating for people. You will be enthusiastic, generic organising role with responsibility for supporting the national officer in providing policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; providing support and guidance to regions, branches and full-time officials.
  - Working with staff to develop submissions for responses and hearings, this will include drafting witness statements. You will be reading evidence bundles and assessing the case, identifying weaknesses and arguments to pursue. Have the regulators demonstrated that they have evidence to the required standard.
  - Assisting and advising UNISON members on reflections, evidence they need to gather as part of their case
  - Represent UNISON members at noncomplex one day hearings for example interim order hearings or reviews
  - Excellent communication skills and able to work to deadlines
  - Supports organising, recruitment and campaign activities in UNISON-wide campaign activities.

- Provides policy advice and bargaining support and guidance,
- Contributes to UNISON responses to government and regulatory consultation documents and legislation.
- Provides support and assistance to regions and branches and regional organisers and staff, as appropriate.
- Liaises and co-ordinates relations with appropriate government departments employers' organisations and other bodies
- Assisting, where appropriate, in research to support branches regions and full-time officials
- Prepare reports, briefings, agendas and minutes.
- Maintain appropriate files and storage using electronic systems
- Arranges meetings and seminars
- Where appropriate delivers presentations to seminars and conferences
- Provides administrative support to national organising staff

The role of the Assistant Professional Services Officer is unique as you will be joining our small but busy team. You will be working in conjunction with other Professional Services Officers, supporting them in cases, you will undertake hearings on non-complex cases, have the ability to develop your own submissions and respond to legal deadlines. You will be a confident communicator supporting UNISON members who are often in distress due to the allegations they face. You will be a team player but able to work independently. The allocation of their areas of work is the responsibility of the Head of Professional Services. Areas of work are reviewed in discussion with the Assistant Professional Services Officer to meet the needs of the organisation and service to regions, branches and members.

### **UNISON's Aims**

The key aims of the union as detailed in our Rule Book seek to:

- i) Extend and promote our influence in the workplace and in the Community.
- ii) Promote, safeguard and facilitate participation by all members in the union's democracy, with special regard to women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.
- iii) Provide effective standards of service in the areas of representation and advice, information to members on the work of the union, the provision of financial benefits and the maintenance of educational facilities for members.

### **Working Time**

The APO post can be a demanding position, requiring some attendance at hearings or meetings outside of the conventional working day, UNISON is a strong supporter of the work/life balance ethos and has a cross union flexible working policy. Post holders will therefore prioritise their working arrangements in such a way as to demonstrate by example their personal commitment to these aims in partnership with senior lay officials.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **UNISON**

#### **Assistant Professional Services Officer**

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**GRADE:** 5

**REPORTS TO:** Head of Professional Services

### **OVERALL SUMMARY**

This post is key in supporting UNISON members who are subject to regulatory investigations and processes.

#### Work Areas

##### Representation:-

- Individual representation that covers:
  - Liaise with members regarding their cases or hearings
  - Gather, organise and document evidence for simple hearings
  - Analyse witness statements to identify differences which can assist cross examination
  - Represent members at non complex one day hearings such as reviews of substantive decisions and interim order hearings.
  - Support members to effectively reflect on their practice
  - Advise them regarding evidence they will need to develop and provide as part of the case presentation
  - Gather witness statements for your own cases and support national officers to gather
  - Act as an advocate at hearings question any witnesses you intend to call, cross examine the regulatory witnesses including medical evidence
  - Prepare any submissions to time to meet regulatory requirements

##### Administration:-

- Ensure the case system is regularly updated
- Support National Officers in PSU with the preparation of their more complex cases
- Close cases when completed and ensure accurate records are kept of the outcome.
- Liaising with regulators about process, assisting to respond to regulatory consultation on legislation, structures or rules. Gathering data and monitoring information across regulators
- Liaise with and support service groups. Support other parts of the organisation on developed regulatory powers
- Support services groups with consultations on professional issues and the expanding shape and make up of regulation

- Use case system and other data to help produce reports on the work of PSU for lay member & other committee&/or meetings
- Undertakes other duties as required by the grade definition or job profile of this post.

**Assistant Professional Services Officer  
Person Specification and Selection Criteria**

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of Interviewing Panels judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Selection criteria</b>
<b>Thinking</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experience of developing solutions to resolve problems including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 analysing information and statistical data</li> <li>1.2 research including carrying out evidence based work in regulatory data</li> <li>1.3 developing materials &amp; communication</li> <li>1.4 developing campaign plans surrounding PSU</li> <li>1.5 Reviewing evidence bundles from regulatory</li> <li>1.6 Insight and ability to act as an advocate</li> <li>1.7 drafting statements of case, evidence from witnesses, cross examining regulatory evidence .</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Learning and Development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 ability to identify training needs self &amp; others</li> <li>2.2 can demonstrate continuous personal learning development.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Interpersonal and Communi-cation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Excellent communication skills both oral and written</li> <li>4. Experience of motivating people to ensure they actively participate in the process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 making presentations, drafting witness statements, writing closing arguments</li> <li>4.2 influencing outcomes at hearings by reasoned argument and summary of evidence meetings</li> <li>4.3 mentoring and coaching</li> <li>4.4 writing guidance for members</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Experience of advocacy, giving advice and representing members including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 conciliation skills to resolve disagreements</li> <li>5.2 responding effectively to people who are angry or upset</li> <li>5.3 Experience of effective team working.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Initiative and Independence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Experience of prioritising own workload including:</li> </ol>

	6.1 decision making within guidelines 6.2 following policies and procedures
<b>Resource management</b>	7. Experience of project co-ordination including:  7.1 time management including ability to meet legal deadlines  7.2 maintaining confidential information including legally sensitive evidence.
<b>Physical Skills</b> <i>(with DDA modification where necessary)</i>	8. Occasional light lifting of materials  9. Ability to travel
<b>General knowledge</b>	10. An understanding of and commitment to the principles of equality and democracy.  11. A Working knowledge of Regulatory Law.  12. An understanding of the role of trade unions and the social and political environment in which the union operates.  13. ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite and PDF editor.